interest subsidy for implementation of Schedule M (of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945) for Good Manufacturing Practices, Schemes for Settlement of old dues under Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1979, Re-structuring of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), pricing to be applied to the specific drugs as listed under National List of Essential Medicine, 2003 and formulations based on 74 bulk drugs under DPCO, 95.

After receipt of comments of various departments, the draft policy would be placed before the Cabinet for approval.

Delinking procurement price from M.S.P.

442. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to delink the procurement price from the Minimum Support Price; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) A proposal to purchase foodgrains at a rate higher than the MSP has been formulated in the Department of Food and Public Distribution, to ensure that the required quantity of foodgrains are procured to meet the commitments under the TPDS and other foodgrains based Welfare Schemes.

Strengthening PDS

443. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal to strengthen PDS keeping in view the changes in the Essential Commodities Act and the recent price rise;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2005 has been introduced in the Parliament in December, 2005 to enable the Government to prune the list of Essential Comodities to the minimum by deleting such commodities which are no longer relevant in the context of present improved supply position, and to facilitate free trade and commerce. Only those commodities considered essential, or which are in the interest of the farmers and the large section of people below poverty line, are proposed to be retained as essential commodities, while giving powers to the Central Govt. to add, remove or modify any essential commodity in public interest, when there is scarcity.

Recently, the Government has taken a decision to import 35 lakh tones of wheat in order to make up the shortfall of wheat stocks in the Central Pool caused by low procurement of wheat in Rabi Marketing Season 2006-07.

Review of food policy

444. SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to review the food policy in view of the lower than expected food production of foodgrains, low procurement of wheat, etc;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the multinationals and private players have taken undue advantage of liberal policy; and

(d) if so, the corrective steps being proposed by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) As per the existing procurement policy the Government agencies (FCI and State Agencies) carry out Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations in all areas of the country having